

### Public Online Information Act (POIA)

On March 16, 2010, Rep. Israel introduced the Public Online Information Act (POIA), a bill that would require all public executive branch information be available online.

“Right now, our government will stamp something ‘public’ and lock it away in a warehouse in Maryland. That’s about as accessible and transparent as a nuclear missile silo,” Rep. Israel has said. “It’s time for ‘public’ to mean something different. People across the country – from scholars to school children – should be able to see any public government information from the convenience of their computer.”

The Public Online Information Act (POIA) requires executive branch agencies to publish all publicly available information on the Internet in a timely fashion and in user-friendly formats. The legislation requires each agency to establish a searchable catalog of all disclosed public documents. It also creates an advisory committee to help develop government-wide Internet publication policies.

OMB’s E-Government Administrator and CIOs at independent agencies are responsible for crafting regulations to implement POIA. The public is granted a limited private right of action (similar to that under FOIA) to guarantee that the government lives up to its transparency obligations. There are commonsense exemptions for trade secrets, matters of national security, personal privacy and other information that is exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

Internet disclosure of public records becomes mandatory three years after enactment of the bill. Public records generated, updated or released after enactment must be published online.

Public information that would be required to be online under my bill but currently is not includes:

- Pension plan annual filings with the Secretary of Labor on how plans are funded, and the underlying assumptions behind their investment strategies.

- Reports disclosing lobbying activities (SF-LLLs) by government contractors and grantees made in connection with winning a grant.
- Filings by high-level government officials of their personal financial interests.
- Reports of when executive branch officials' travel is paid for by third parties, and not the government.
- Tax returns of organizations that are exempt from federal taxation.
- Videos maintained by the National Archives.

Information about the Public Online Information Act is also available at <http://thepoia.org>.

### Efforts for Greater Transparency

Rep. Israel has worked in Congress to increase transparency. As a Member of the House Appropriations Committee, he supported unprecedented transparency reforms. He is also one of the few Members of Congress to voluntarily post his personal financial disclosure on his website.

Rep. Israel has compiled this list of "open government" resources. Visit these sites to learn about how the government is spending tax dollars or how you can participate in the government process.

If you have an idea about putting this data to work or more resources that should be added, [please contact Rep. Israel's office](#).

### Open Government Resources

[Steve's Sunshine Corner](#) : Read Rep. Israel's Appropriations requests and personal financial disclosure.

[Open Book New York](#) : Track New York's federal stimulus investment.

[Data.gov](#) : Datasets from the federal government and tools to help use them.

[IT Dashboard](#) : Data.gov's federal IT spending resource with detailed info on federal IT contracts.

[Open Government Initiative](#) : See what the White House is doing for transparency and participation.

[Regulations.gov](#) : All regulations issued by government agencies and a place to discuss them.

[HealthReform.gov](#) : Latest news and ways to participate in the discussion on health care reform.

[DefenseSolutions.gov](#) : Portal to submit ideas directly to the Department of Defense.

[Global Development Commons](#) : USAID agency promoting innovations for international development.